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A Message from Your President

By Laurie Hamilton, P.Biol., ASPB President

Happy New Year! Did you know that December 1st is the start of the Society's fiscal new year?

Some year-end numbers are starting to come in, with more to follow in future BIOS and the Annual Report. The Society has grown from 605 members to 951 members since 2006, a 57% increase (Figure 1). Growth showed a steady increase despite the 'economic downturn', or perhaps because of it. The Board is delighted with this rate of growth and anticipates further membership growth over the next several years.

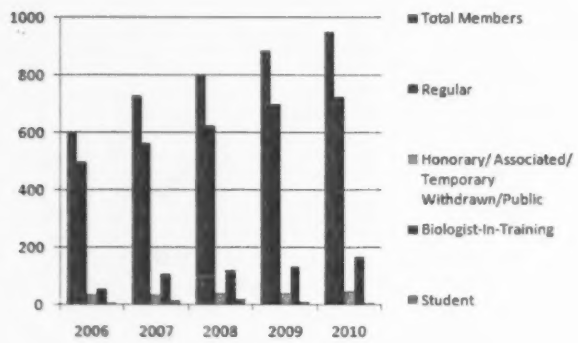

Figure 1. Annual Membership Totals from 2006 to 2010 (Source: ASPB membership database)

This growth in membership has required increased process development and development of benefits to members, as well as ongoing maintenance of ASPB as a Society. The Board and volunteers continue to develop new initiatives and improve maintenance processes, with some recent examples that include:

- Hosting professional development events **(Webinars and Brown Bag Lunches),** such as:
  - o Worldwide Crisis, Local Concern: Amphibian Conservation in Alberta, presented by Kris Kendell of the Alberta Conservation Association;
  - o The Bow River Initiative, presented by Tracy Tarves of Western Sky Land Trust;
  - o Alberta Bats: Recent Discoveries and Future Prospects, presented by Robert Barclay of the University of Calgary; and,
  - o Wetland Impact Assessment **best management practices development,** presented by Rob Simieritsch of Alberta Environment (AENV)
- Developing a Brown Bag Lunch based on ASPB's Code of Practice
- Coordinating the annual conference, entitled "The Role of the Biologist in Industrial Development" (see call-out in this issue)
- Coordinating an insurance program specifically designed for members of the ASPB, through HUB International Insurance Brokers
- Securing the services of the new Executive Director on an annual contract basis
- Approving the Practice Review Committee's terms of reference
- Approving the new budget
- Reviewing awards' nomination forms and protocols

Volunteers have been and will continue to be key to the successful growth and maintenance of the Society. Volunteers contribute as little as 2 hours per month to as much as 100 hours per month, depending on the participation level required for a given activity. Volunteering for the Society will help an ASPB member collect points towards the Continuing Competency Program (CCP), a mandatory program since 2009 for all ASPB members. It also allows great opportunities to

Continued on page 3

In This Issue

A Message from Your President 1
ASPB 2011 Conference 2
ASPB Call For Volunteers 2
ASPB Board Nominations 3
ASPB Awards 3
ASPB Reminders 4
New Topics on the ASPB Discussion Forum 4
ASPB Membership Renewals 4
2010 BIOS Submission Prize Winner 4
Government of Alberta News 4

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BIOS is published for the enjoyment and benefit of the members of the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists and those interested in the field of professional biology. Articles or comments are welcomed and should be sent to the editor, Linda Zimmerling at lindazim@shaw.ca.

ASPB 2011 Conference - Calgary Zoo April 13-14, 2011

"The Role of the Biologist in Industrial Development"

Call for Papers

The Alberta Society of Professional Biologists' (ASPB) 2011 conference titled "The Role of the Biologist in Industrial Development" will be held at the Calgary Zoo in Calgary, Alberta on April 13 and 14, 2011. Alberta's biologists are being increasingly challenged when working in Alberta's dynamic arena of industrial development. The intent of this conference is to examine the biologist's role in industrial development. ASPB invites submissions for presentations describing recent challenges, solutions and successes related to industrial development and the role of the biologist.

The conference will provide ASPB members, involved in industrial development, a forum for sharing new ideas and to allow industry representatives to understand the role of biologists in industrial development. Share your successes and challenges, facilitate new ideas, contribute to discussion and debate the issues!

Contributions should focus on the role of the biologist in:

- Environmental regulation and guideline development,
- Pre- and post-development biological assessments,
- Impact assessments,
- Monitoring, and
- Reclamation

Sectors of industrial development include:

- Non-renewable Resources (e.g., oil sands, conventional oil and gas, mining, natural gas)
- Renewable Resources (e.g., forestry, wildlife, water, hydro-electricity)
- Alternative Energies (e.g., wind, solar and nuclear energy)
- Municipal Development (e.g., rural expansion, urban development, infrastructure)
- Linear Developments (e.g., energy corridors, pipelines, transmission lines, highways)

The 2011 ASPB Conference Committee welcomes presentation abstract submissions for review. Target audiences include industry representatives, consultants, government, First Nations, environmental advocates and academia. Topics are not restricted geographically, but should be relevant to biologists in Alberta. Papers will be peer-reviewed; acceptance of the contributions will be based on originality of the work, relevance to the conference topic (focusing on the biological approach to industrial development), and overall quality of the submission.

An abstract should follow the format outlined in the Call for Papers available on the website at www.aspb.ab.ca . **The deadline for submissions is February 4, 2011.**

ASPB Call for Volunteers

Communication Committee
Kristen Foreman is stepping down from the position of Chair that she has held since November 2008. Members who are interested in taking over the position, please e-mail Kristen Foreman (kforeman@teraenv.com) and Scott Grindal (grindalstefan@yahoo.ca). Kristen Foreman will be available to pass on what she has learned over the last few years, so that the transition will be smooth. This has been a rewarding volunteer position for Kristen, and she looks forward to passing the torch.

Edmonton Professional Development Committee
The Edmonton Professional Development Committee needs your help. If you are interested in this volunteer opportunity, please contact Angela at angela.holzapfel@newmont.com

A Message from Your President (continued)

improve your resume, to network and to contribute meaningfully to the Society.

The ASPB Board has many ideas on how to improve the Society and provide more benefits to members, and volunteers are critical to such initiatives. If you are interested in exploring some volunteer opportunities, please feel free to contact me at laurie@zanshinenvironmental.com.

Volunteer efforts are also integral to creating links between Society members, through de-centralization, as well as to the public, through participation on provincial-level professional committees.

Decentralizing the Society

Daring feats (in my opinion) by some volunteers have provided the Society with technological advances, through webinars and on-line discussion forums. I hope that these will help to de-centralize the Society and regionalize our practice.

The Edmonton Professional Development Committee started hosting events via webinar, and other brave and technologically savvy volunteers have been successful at some of the Calgary events. I am looking into hosting the Annual General Meeting via webinar (but I am not that technologically savvy). Our Executive Director, Ross, is currently looking into this technology and how to standardize its implementation to the organization. I was hoping that a member would volunteer to help Ross out with this project in the hopes that it can be de-mystified (mainly to myself) for implementation purposes at the AGM and for the Society as a whole. If you are interested, please contact me.

There are currently eleven discussion topics in the members' Discussion Forum. Topics include Boreal Woodland Caribou, Alberta's Grizzly Bear, the ASPB Ethics exam, ASPB's endorsement of ASRD's procedural standards for Species-at-Risk, and most recently, development of best management practices for wetland impact assessments. This is a useful tool that can facilitate members' understanding of the biological realm of Alberta, as well as unifying approaches and launching innovative ideas.
I hope that webinars and discussion forums can help to de-centralize the Society and make us a more unified group, benefitting all.

Professional Representation In Alberta

ASPB meets regularly with other professional organizations on a Joint Environmental Professional Practice (JEPP) Board. A recent meeting of the JEPP Board provided some interesting insight into the direction that the government is heading, and where the Alberta Government is looking to professionals to reinforce the standards of practice when sub-standard work is submitted and competency is questionable. Reclamation and remediation sign-off is still undergoing some hiccups, as practitioners continue to struggle to maintain high quality products while being competitive in price. The ASPB Board's approval of the Practice Review Committee's terms of reference and the ongoing development of ASPB's codes of practice, and professional development opportunities will serve to prepare our members.

I am proud to work with a group of such dedicated members and volunteers who have created such an impressive list of accomplishments. I look forward to having new volunteers aid the ASPB in meeting the growing challenges and taking us around the next bend.

ASPB Board Nominations

The ASPB Board is requesting nominations for the following positions:

President-elect, which is the President 'in training' position. Responsibilities include participating in Board meetings, and chairing meetings when the President is not able to. Additional responsibilities include participation in Executive level discussions and decisions, as well as participation in whatever portfolio you volunteer for as a member of the Board. This is a three year commitment, with one year as President-Elect, one year as President and one year as Past President.

Director. Responsibilities include participating in Board meetings and whatever portfolio you volunteer for as a member of the Board. This is a two year commitment. There are nine Board meetings per year held in Calgary and Edmonton. Meetings can also be attended remotely (i.e., by teleconference).

To qualify as a nominee, you must be a regular member in good standing and you will need to complete a nomination form. Nomination forms are available on the ASPB website in the Member Downloads. You will need signatures from three ASPB members. Once complete, you will need to send the completed nomination form to pbiol@aspb.ab.ca with "Board Nomination Form" in the subject line.

Nominations are due by January 28, 2011.

ASPB Awards

Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2011

Details and nomination forms are available on the website at www.aspb.ab.ca

The Peggy Thompson Publication Awards are designed to recognize and encourage high standards of achievement in publishing biological information and in conveying an understanding of the concepts and application of biological sciences. Awards are presented in the following three categories:

- Scientific papers published in professional, refereed journals;
- Biological technical reports; and
- Publications and/or other media (e.g., videos) communicating biological information to the general public.

Dr. J. Dewey Soper Award recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions in the field of biology. The recipient must be a Canadian biologist, be nominated by two ASPB members, and receive unanimous consent of the ASPB Board of Directors.

For additional information, or to submit a nomination, contact Dave Ealey at dave.ealey@gov.ab.ca.

ASPB Reminders

Update Annual CCP

The ASPB would like to remind members to continue updating their continuing competency points (CCP). Please note that the Practice Review Committee will be working on the audit process this coming year.

ASPB Ethics Exam

The Ethics Exam is available on-line, through the ASPB website www.aspb.ab.ca in the 'Members' page, under 'Exams'.
The exam should take approximately 1/2 hour to complete.

All regular members have three years to complete the exam on-line; however, the ASPB encourages regular members to complete it sooner.
For Biologists-in-training, the Ethics Exam is now a requirement for re-classification.

Please direct all inquiries to pbiol@aspb.ab.ca and reference 'ASPB Ethics On-line Exam' in the subject line.

New Topics on the ASPB Discussion Forum

Check out what your colleagues are sharing on the ASPB Discussion Forum and add your expertise to the requests for input. Two recently added topics include:

- **Retired P. Biol.** A discussion on the topic of retired professional biologists and the desire to have them connected to the ASPB so we can benefit from their experience.
- **WIA BMP** Wetland Impact Assessment Best Management Practices Development. The ASPB is working with Rob Simieritsch, of AENV, in an effort to develop Wetland Impact Assessment best management practices and mitigation measures. On Dec. 8, 2010, ASPB hosted a brown bag lunch to launch this effort. As a second phase to this initiative a draft table of contents (TOC) for a WIA, which includes BMPs, has been created for discussion purposes. From this discussion, the BMP guidelines will be developed. The Draft TOC and the powerpoint presentation from the BBL are available on the ASPB's website under Members>Login>Forums>General Discussion>WIA BMP Development. Comments and contributions are requested by March 31, 2011.

ASPB Membership Renewals

2011 Membership renewal notices have now gone out. Membership dues will be accepted online only. Therefore no cheques or money orders will be accepted. The deadline for 2011 Membership dues is January 31st. If you have any questions about the renewal process please contact Shauna at shauna@managewise.ca or call 780-434-5765.

2010 BIOS Submission Prize Winner

Congratulations to Cal Sikstrom, P.Biol., for his article *'Hoo Are You'* from the Spring 2010 edition of BIOS.

If you have a story or an issue you would like to share with your fellow professionals, please submit it to lindazim@shaw.ca .

Government of Alberta News

Alberta Invasive Alien Species Risk Assessment Tool

Alberta has a new tool to identify and evaluate potential impacts of land-based plants and aquatic organisms from outside the province. This will help government, companies and individuals coordinate early detection, rapid response and containment. Alberta's Invasive Alien Species Risk Assessment Tool, a web-based evaluation, looks at a species' likelihood of establishing and spreading, and its possible effects on an area.

The tool focuses on aquatic organisms and land-based plants. It is a key component of Alberta's Invasive Alien Species Management Framework. **The tool and framework are being piloted for feedback until June 1, 2011.** To learn more or to use the tool and submit feedback, visit www.agriculture.alberta.ca/risktool.

An invasive alien species is a non-native species that, if introduced into the environment, can affect Alberta's native species and economy by degrading habitat and damaging agricultural land and crops. Societal effects may include odours, allergies or impacts on recreation. White oxeye daisy, for example, is not native to Alberta and can reduce hay production and affect the taste of milk from dairy cattle.

GoA's First Nations Consultation Policy and Guidelines on Land Management and Resource Development

Sustainable Resource Development has implemented a consistent province-wide procedure to facilitate application of the Government of Alberta's First Nations Consultation Policy and Guidelines on Land Management and Resource Development. For more information, procedures, forms and contact information, please visit:
http://www.srd.alberta.ca/ManagingPrograms/FirstNationsConsultationProcedures/Default.aspx

Revised Reclamation Certificate Application Form

Alberta Environment has released a revised reclamation certificate application form for the 2010 reclamation criteria. The form is available at:
http://environment.alberta.ca/01884.html

You will notice that Alberta Environment has added coal and oilsands exploration wells to the form as non-routine activities while Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development further develop the application process for these sites.
You may find that a box appears when first opening the form that says "This operation is not permitted." Click ok until it disappears. It does not affect the function of the form.